

INTERVIEWEE: BILL GRAY

INTERVIEWER: Patricia Young

SUBJECT:

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TRANSCRIBER: Linda A. Jantzen

PY: This is an interview with Bill Gray for the Historical Society of Palm Desert Oral History Project on Saturday, May 10, 1980, at one-thirty in the afternoon at his home in Colony Park in Indio, California.

I think we can begin now by just talking about your time spent at the Krutz Ranch.

BG: I believe it was September or October of 1941 when I went to the Krutz Ranch. Claire Eastman got on me at that time. Her and her father lived in the house on the ranch. And I remember Jack Ray was the ranch foreman at that time. She was a lover of dogs. She had four or five Pekingese dogs. On the ranch there where the date palms, existing date palms, that I guess it takes a forty-eight to fifty-foot ladder to work now. We picked those standing on the ground at that time.

And across the highway I remember, across the highway there was nothing on the south side of the highway from Cook Street to was going to say Palm Desert, but there wasn't a Palm Desert. It was Palm Village at that time. Nothing on the south side there. I remember we hauled the dates, each afternoon we loaded the dates. And that was usually my chore during date picking to haul the dates to the Garden of Setting Sun in Mecca, which was owned at that time by Mrs. Cast; don't know if that's still, they still exist or not. I believe Bert Cavanagh lived in the two-story house across the street from there on Cook Street at that time. On the east side of Cook Street was the Cook Ranch, the original Cooks. At that time Mr. Cook had passed away and Mrs. Cook lived there alone.

PY: The building that the Indian Wells Date Gardens is using now, was that part of the original house?

BG: That was Claire East Magaw's home. The date shop, The Outpost, that was Claire East's home. She lived there. Then there was two other small houses to the east of there. Excuse me, west of there on that ranch.

PY: So it was fairly close to Highway 111?

BG: Right. Right on one eleven. At that time it was a

two-lane highway, soft shoulders. Anyone that pulled off needed help to get back on.

PY: What kind of dates were they raising there?

BG: There were the Daglets mostly. She had three or four palms of black dates, I believe, Black Beauty, and the rest of them were Daglet. She had grapefruit between her house and the dates. I believe they'd pull those out and burn them just recently or most of them.

PY: So do you know how many acres they actually had in there?

BG: I had in mind twenty acres; I believe that's right. It went from Highway 111 to Avenue 44. And from Cook Street to where the Hidden Palms is now, which was, I believe at that time, was Bill Cook's, which was the son of the Mrs. Cook who was one time our County Supervisor. So I believe it was twenty acres.

PY: Do you remember anything about Patton's forces being in Palm Desert? Were you here?

BG: No, I left before they, I've came back a time or two on leave when they were there. But I left before they put up their tent city there in Palm Desert or Palm Village. I think it was still Palm Village, which was only in 1941, Palm Village was the swimming pool, which was a reservoir that irrigated the grapefruit farm originally. Then they

turned that into a swimming pool. And a real estate office which I don't remember the name. Now I think it was on the corner of Portola. And there was no streets. Two or three just little blacktop roads that went to the north side of Palm Desert, which is Palm Desert now. In seventy-four, I believe seventy-four, it still was the only street on the south side of the highway.

PY: Do you remember many homes in there at that time?

BG: No, there was, west of Cook Street, there was very few. Two or three ranch homes in Palm Desert. And there was one little house that was rented by the I take Swafford family, which little house still there right on seventy-four. Then further up, I guess what's Cahuilla Hills now there was I remember one, one little house set back in there. A lady, Mrs. Roach, lived back in there. And I believe that was about the extent of the buildings at that time.

PY: And on the Palm Village side?

BG: There was only the two or three ranch houses. That was all of Palm Village early on to forty-four from Highway 111 to forty-four was practically all grapefruit and dates in there.

PY: Part of Gillette's holdings in there?

BG: I don't remember who owned that at that time. I think one of the old houses set there where the, one of the water tanks is on Portola. There was an old water tank there on Portola as part of the water company, I suppose. One of the ranch houses set there. Then there was another one back west of there closer to Avenue 44. And I believe that was the only house in there in 1941, forty and forty-one.

PY: Did you work anywhere in the cove area besides the Krutz Ranch?

BG: Not until after nineteen, when I got out of service in 1945. I did pick dates, did date work in the La Quinta area in the cove there which was Keener Corporation at that time. And also had houses there for the La Quinta Water District, but I don't know if the name was La Quinta Water District, but it was the water district that served La Quinta. The homes were there on the ranch that the people lived in that worked for the water district. And that's about the only place that I worked in the valley until after 1945.

PY: What kind of people were working with you at the Krutz Ranch in La Quinta?

BG: There were, oh, mostly American that was here from Texas,

Oklahoma and Arkansas that lived in Indian Wells in the little cabins. There were two places in Indian Wells that had little cabins for rent at that time. And I remember three or four people from there worked with us. Frank found one of the stores and stations in Indian Wells, which was Indian Wells at that time. Then east of there was a little market, beer joint and seven little cottages, one-room cottages. At that time that was, those two places was Indian Wells.

PY: Frank Warrens had some cottages, too?

BG: Yes. He had about three, I believe, on the north side of one eleven. And it might have been later than that in forty-five or forty-four that he built some on the back of the property on the south side of the highway. But his store and station was on the south side of one eleven, but he had, I believe, three little rentals on the north side of one eleven.

PY: So by the 1940s there weren't as many Mexicans coming from Mexico working the dates?

BG: No. We saw very, very few at that time. I believe it was the late forties or early fifties when they really started coming in to do date work. No, there was plenty of Americans to do the date work at that time.

PY: What kind of wages were you earning then?

BG: About three dollars a day in 1941.

PY: Was that pretty good at that time?

BG: No, it was just a living, but things had just started going up, you know, at that time. Well, we started at about that. Then in forty I came here and stayed a few months in 1940. Then I came back in 1941. I think it was in 1940 when I probably, when I worked for three dollars a day. And it had gone up some in 1941. And from there on, you know, it has gone up and hasn't stopped yet. (chuckle)

PY: You said you came here just for a short period of time. Where you coming from?

BG: Texas, west Texas.

PY: What attracted you to this area?

BG: I had a sister out here where they had oranges, sunshine, and gold rush and all that sort of stuff. I came out here so I wouldn't have to work anymore. (laughter) Stayed about three months, then went back, and I came again in 1941, and I've been here since.

PY: What made you come back again?

BG: Oh, when I got back home, back to west Texas, I got to thinking it wasn't as bad out here as I thought it was. (laughter) For those three months, you know. Things can change, you know, real quick at home after you leave

for a little while. And I got to thinking it wasn't too bad. It was worth trying again. (chuckle)

PY: Where were you living at the time you were working at Indian Wells?

BG: On the Krutz Ranch? I lived there on the ranch.

PY: Everyone else did as well?

BG: Just the foreman and I. Jack Ray was foreman then.

Then they hired extra help which there was quite a group of men that did date work and all you had to do was pass the word that you needed help and they were always available or would be in a few days. Well, they just went, a lot of those people went from ranch to ranch. And there was the farm labor camp here in Indio, was here at that time. And occasionally go and get some inexperienced help from there, but the people that did, especially in the date work, tried to stick with someone that had, that knew what they were doing in the date trees. Because it's kind of an art in itself.

PY: It was

BG: Yes.

PY: How did you learn?

BG: The hard way. I was broke and needed a job and first date trees climbed was for R. E. Duncan. I believe he

might still be here in the valley. He had some dates on Highway 111. I don't know just where it was. I think it has been removed since then. Stopped, they need some date pickers. That was my first experience. Quite an experience first time you climb a date tree.

PY: Why?

BG: Oh, it's scary.

PY: Because they're tall?

BG: Yes. And if there's any breeze, they have that twisting motion. You're hanging up there with nothing between you and the ground. It is.

PY: Is it dangerous?

BG: Yes. If you get the least bit careless, it is. Plus the date thorns and the knives and things that they use in the tree can be very dangerous if you get a little careless with your tools or the equipment that you're using.

PY: Has that improved at all over the years?

BG: Oh, yes, yes. There's probably ninety percent of that done with a machine with the booms at least to put the men in the trees. And a lot of the picking is just chop the bunch and drop it into a basket now. Where at that time we picked by hand, went through each bunch from two to three times. As the day we went

through the bunches and picked out the wrapped dates. And week or ten days later, depending on the weather, we would go back through and go through the bunch and pick out the wrapped again. Sometimes as much as three or four pickings on each tree. And that's when they really went for quality dates.

PY: Which is to say they've given that up now.

BG: Yes. Yes, the natural date is pretty hard, it's pretty hard to buy a natural date now. Most everything is hydrated. Dried, then it's dehydrated. Which is all right. The public seems to like it all right.

PY: Costs less.

BG: I think so. To harvest and handle anyway.

PY: What was it like working at the Krutz Ranch?

BG: It was good. No one ever pushed us. I mean to that point. I remember, one thing I remember that when pay day, if pay day was on, say, tomorrow and Claire East was going to Los Angeles today for two or three days, she never paid until she got back. That's one thing that I wished, in our minds. And we used to get a little put out with her about that. But otherwise she was a good girl to work for.

PY: Where would you go? It sounds like you were stuck out

in the middle of nowhere.

BG: Indio. To the movie or someplace. That's about all there was.

PY: down here?

BG: Yes. And I had relatives here in the valley.

PY: Indio?

BG: Yes. That had been here for some time.

PY: Did you more or less have long hours when you were working?

BG: Nine hours, six days, sometimes five and a half. We had a break if we got off five and a half days.

PY: And that was typical then?

BG: Right.

PY: So everyone always gave you, what, Sunday off or something?

BG: Yes. Especially in dates. There's other agriculture, of course, there's times that everyone had to work on Sunday. Sometimes grapes, vegetables and that sort of thing. But dates usually get Sunday off. And sometimes like I say half a day on Saturday, which was a break.

PY: When you came back in forty-five, were you again picking dates at that point?

BG: Yes. I kind of jumped around from job to job, you know,

for quite some time. And I went, in forty-eight, I believe it was 1948, I went, worked down at the High School. I worked down there a year and a half, forty-nine. And I went from there to Indian Wells where the Desert Horizons is being built now. And I stayed there until the year and a half had gone.

PY: Oh, tell me about that. What that the Morans?

BG: No, it was east of the Moran Ranch. There was the dates that was still there along the highway, that's part of it. That was, when I went there that was the McKinzey Ranch. He was president of the Hollywood Park Racetrack. Went to work for him. And then there was Smead Ranch, was twenty acres between, was east of McKinzey Ranch. Then there was Hershel G. had twenty acres more east of there. Went up to the Moran Ranch. But eventually I was in charge of the three ranches, you know, when I left there. Or I mean long before I left, but later on. The corporation finally bought the other two ranches and I was in charge of the three ranches.

PY: Was that one of these management corporations?

BG: No, no. It's George Gobel and some of those.

PY: People we hear about?

BG: Yes.

PY: But never see.

BG: Right. Yes. They owned that in there.

PY: Was everyone living in there or were they just dates?

BG: I lived there on the ranch, and then back of Moran Ranch there was a house in there. It was Art Cavanagh's, which was originally part of the Moran Ranch, twenty acres there. And there was two or three labor houses around the Moran Ranch. I believe that's all the there were in there.

PY: **Art Cavanagh being Bert Cavanagh's brother?**

BG: No. No, it's a different. Art is dead now, but Bert has been in there for a long time. He's planted a lot of those old dates. I understand him and his father planted them. The Cook Ranch is one of the old ranches in there which is going down by the, was there on Cook and one eleven on the northeast corner. I don't know if you remember. It had a big fire in there a few years back that burned most of that out. And I believe some of the Cooks are still here in the valley.

PY: I talked to Robert Cook.

BG: Oh.

PY: Yes. The younger of the two boys.

BG: Oh, yes. Haven't seen him for years. I worked for him one time I think in 1947 or something. He had a little shed down, packed macerated dates in Coachella in a

little place there. I didn't know what happened to him.

PY: Now over in Laguna Niguel, Laguna Beach area, and his mother's over there, too. She's still living, and she's a hundred and three or four or something.

BG: Oh. Yes, well, she lived there on the ranch by herself in a two-story house. They moved way later years. And there's Bud Swindler. Do you know him?

PY: I don't know him.

BG: I believe he married one of the Cook girls. And I think he still has the C. V. Tile plant in Coachella.

PY: Tile plant?

BG: Yes. C. V., Coachella Valley Tile. I believe it still goes by that name.

PY: What about the Arkell Ranch? That was right around there, too, wasn't it?

BG: That was the, what the Moran bought, yes. Yes, that was the Arkells lived there when we came here.

PY: What was your position then with McKinzey and the corporation?

BG: Been ranch foreman there for about twenty-five, twenty-seven years.

PY: How did you notice the area changing?

BG: Oh, it's a gradual change until just recently, seemed

like, just a few years back. Across the highway where the Finberger Construction. All that is was Manzo Grape Vineyard at that, you know, back in the fifties. And across where Indian Wells is now there was Braun Ranch, T. W. Braun, I believe. And, you know, you just gradually see those, the Manzo Grapes, I believe, was the first thing that went. And they put in the Casa Dorado. That was part of it. Ranch Palmeras was another one of McKinzey Ranches. He had two, one halfway to the fire station is now, and Rancho Palmeras was the twenty acres of dates. I was in charge of those two places first. And then Mr. Peterson bought that and he was the first mayor, you know, of Indian Wells, developed that area. But they talked change, you know, for several years and seemed like nothing ever happened. And then just overnight everything started happening. And for several years we lived there from just year to year. They'd say, well, this looks like it might be the last year for dates. And we stayed there several years like that until the you know, bought that three hundred acres in there. The past three years is when that was really built in that area.

PY: Why do you think that people were interested in selling

if the dates are now bringing the high prices in?

BG: About eight years ago dates were, I guess, some of the date land was worth less than raw land. So the dates had come up that much in the past eight years. They weren't paying taxes eight years ago. And some of that property has been sold, you know, for that long and just hadn't been developed. And some of it has changed, you know, changed hands two or three times.

PY: What do you mean the dates, the property with date was worth less than raw land?

BG: Oh, yes. There was a lot of people that were letting their date gardens go. They couldn't even afford to, you know, maintain a date garden because they were losing money every year. And now dates are a good price. But but then I guess date gardens started selling back then. But right now, I guess they have to pay a good price for a date garden. I don't understand sometime why they build in a date garden, remove all the palms, when there's desert land right beside of it, but I guess they know what they're doing.

PY: Well, I guess they wander their palms around you can keep the or something. (laughter) Who knows? Who knows? You said you were living on a property. Where

were you living?

BG: Here at Indian Wells. Just across from the fire station east and north, or west and north, excuse me. Just west and north of the fire station, just off of El Dorado Drive.

PY: And that was a house to live in instead of foreman?

BG: That was the Smead's home at one time. I don't know if you know the Smeads or not. They've been there, they've owned that ranch from about 1940, I think. And they used to have a little date shop on the road, on the highway. And there's still some of them in the valley, Walter Smead.

PY: S-M-E-A-D?

BG: Yes. And Paul Smead, he was involved in the dates, I believe. He was over in Algeria awhile with the date industry.

PY: Is he still living?

BG: I believe so. The old man moved to Yucaipa and I'm not sure if he's still living or not.

PY: Walter and Paul are brothers?

BG: Right. I believe Walter, someone told me not too long back that he lived around La Quinta someplace in that

area. It's probably listed in the telephone directory. And he was practically raised there on the ranch. See, they had the little date shed; they sold practically their twenty acres of dates there on the highway. There was, in fact in earlier days there was several date shops along, one up where Rancho Palmeras is was the Day Date Garden, and Ripple. That was a date shop. I guess still is there, you know.

PY: The El Dorado Date Shop?

BG: Yes, right. That was Reapole's and Smith and Shields. Well, Shields wasn't on the highway at that time. They set back on end of Shields Road.

PY: Bert Cavanagh said there was one right by his property, too, right along the highway.

BG: That might have been the Smeads. I don't know, maybe there was another one. Smead, that's just a short distance from Bert Cavanagh's.

PY: People getting good price for dates that way?

BG: Yes. I guess they sell them below, you know, store market retail, but they still get much more than they would for shipping them through a company.

PY: Were there many tourists then going down to Indio area?

BG: Yes, there has been, oh, would seem like nothing compared

to now, but there has always, since I've known it, there's always been tourists from, through Palm Springs to Indio. Anyone that came through the valley, I guess, that was sightseeing at all felt that they should come through, take one eleven from Palm Springs to Indio. Then they had the, it was more of a scenic drive. Then they had what they called the scenic drive. It was Avenue 46 that goes on out by the high school, where one eleven turns. It wound through to across the canal and back. And I don't remember what was in there, but they called that little strip a scenic drive to Indio. You usually could see more dates and grapefruit through that way. And there's always, since I can remember, anyone that has come through has always stopped at these date shops. I think it's just a matter of getting dates out where the public can buy them. I don't think they've ever had an over supply of dates. Just a matter of people getting a chance to buy a few. It's been date capital of the world. I guess you'd have to buy a few dates. (chuckle) if you came to the desert.

PY: Mainly Deglet Noors in Indian Wells or . . .

BG: Right. There's a few Medjhoods. Bert Cavanagh had about probably five acres of Medjhoods. And McKinzey

Ranch had about an acre. And there's a few trees around of Barhees. I didn't know over half a dozen black date trees in that area. Mostly Deglet.

PY: Anyone doing any experimentation there or was it just simply going with what everyone knew worked?

BG: Just, I think just what they knew worked. I guess they depended on the experimental station here on Clinton to do most of the experimenting.

PY: Now how did you find your crews . . . Well, let me ask this, did your crews change at all over the years or was it same people or same kinds of people who were coming through?

BG: Well, after 1948, along in there, we, there was a lot of, the date work seemed like it was mostly done by wetback and the bracero, you know. Had the bracero program in for years, and that was a pretty good program, I guess. But a lot of people worked the wetbacks even at that time. And it seemed to work out fairly good from then on. I didn't know many of the local people that did, they'd climb the date trees. They were getting taller and I guess they had, after the war, they had scattered out into the cities and gotten different jobs, better jobs.

PY: Many of those people that you worked with, the men that you worked with in early forties, did you ever see them around the area again after later steadily?

BG: No, I don't believe I can think of a one.

PY: Anything that stands out in your memory after all those years in that area?

BG: I don't believe so. It's been quite some time ago.

PY: You raised your children then in Indian Wells?

BG: Right. I have three sons, and my second son, he was about a year and a half old when we went to Indian Wells. And about twenty-seven years. I lived there on the ranch after I'd gone to work for the city. I've worked for the city about eight years. But I was still in charge of the ranch and lived on the ranch after I worked for the city. I mean, I didn't run the crews or anything, but just to see that everything was kind of taken care of.

PY: By the time the Teamsters moved in there, how much were the crews making a day? Just as some comparison to when you started?

BG: Oh. I don't, I really don't know the, I haven't kept the, you know, any time on any of the guys or made any pay-checks for them since before I went to work, but at the time I went to work for the city, about five years ago,

four years ago, one of the guys thinning Medjhools told me that he was quitting early. And I asked him how he could afford to do that, and he said he was making his fifty dollars and going home. Said fifty dollars a day is all that he wanted. So that was quite a different from my three dollars when I started.

PY: You really went through inflation.

BG: Yes, that's right. You couldn't make three dollars and go home early when I first started. I mean that was a good long day. Well, nine hours was just an accepted day, you know, on ranch work when we came here.

PY: And now are they working a nine-hour day or less?

BG: No. I think most of them supposed to work eight, but I don't know if that figures traveling time both ways or not. (chuckle) No, I think they have it pretty good. I don't mandate them any because some of it is rough and hazardous work, but they get paid, as a rule, pretty good for farm labor.

PY: So they can't live in Indian Wells anymore. They're living further east?

BG: I suppose in Coachella, Indio.

PY: The crews you've been working with are coming in from Coachella?

BG: Right, yes. And for several labor camps here in the valley for quite some time. We had fifty acres, forty acres, of grapes there on the McKinzey Ranch. Then we used mostly Filipino crew for those. And they had this labor camp in Thermal, and I guess one outside of Indio here. And practically all of those came from the labor camp. They still have the farm labor camp down here. I don't know if you have a farm laborer to live in there now or not, down on Van Buren Street. I really don't know what the situation is on farm labor housing. Most ranches used to have at least one small house where they could at least have a ranch foreman or someone that they could depend on to live, kind of see after things. But anymore all the cheap housing is gone, so I don't know what they do.

PY: Do the people and the men in the labor camps stay there year round or are they off somewhere in the summer?

BG: There's some of those that follow the fruit and vegetables, you know. The other Filipinos go from here north to Lodi and all up in there or later up there so they can get in on pretty near whatever they need to do here. They can just move right along, follow it north and have work practically the year round. By the time they get

through picking up there it's almost time to prune again down here. Now the date laborers, there's not too much, if you schedule it right, there's not too much here that there isn't something to do in date garden unless you bring in a big crew and just catch some of them.

Side 2 of 2:

PY: There are several operations you were saying?

BG: Yes. and you pollinate, tie the bunches down, put on the papers, dust three or four times. Medjhools you hand pin in each strand by hand on the Medjhools and pick plus your groundwork.

PY: So there's still a fairly specialized group?

BG: Right.

PY: The date workers.

BG: Right.

PY: Was it at any point hard to get men to work the dates?

BG: Yes. It's never really been that easy. I mean, to just have an abundant supply of labor for dates. Right now I suppose for the past few years I guess it's worse than it has been for some time. Especially since there was so much construction work, you know. People could go in construction work instead of working date trees. And I

think the laborers pretty well controlled, for past few years, pretty well controlled the operations of the date industry because the, well, labor is not that easy to get, so you more or less tell crew what you will do and what you won't do instead of the other way around.

PY: Have there been labor unions formed?

BG: Yes. A lot of the grapes have been in union for quite a few years, and most of the dates, I believe, there is now, I believe. Cal-Date is mostly union now, which I suppose they have seventy-five percent of the dates. Sixty, seventy-five percent of the dates in the valley is, I believe, controlled by Cal-Date. And I understand that most everything is union with them.

PY: Did you ever have to work with Cal-Date?

BG: Yes, I worked with them, I worked for, when I went to work for the city, well, Cal-Date leased the date ranch there, ranches there where I lived. And I stayed on and worked with them and then just some conditions I worked for Cal-Date irrigating and . . .

PY: Is there any

BG: Well, part of the time I was _____ part of the
time, you know, some operations they had to sell what
was _____. No, I hadn't had any problem with Cal-Date.

Oh, they seemed to be more than fair with me.

PY: Can you think of anything else?

BG: No.

PY: Because I've run out. (laughter)

BG: I don't think so.

PY: Someone was telling me the other day that around 1940, forty-one there were like two phones in Rancho Mirage. And that it was a similar situation all through the valley. Did the Krutz Ranch, when you were working there, have a phone?

BG: I don't remember.

PY: Did you use a phone much then?

BG: No. As far as I know they didn't have one. I don't know if they even had lines out there or not.

PY: How about when you came back in the late forties?

BG: Yes. Yes, there was quite a few then. Before then I don't remember. I don't remember one there on the ranch. It seemed like I would have remembered, too, because seemed like there would have been some occasion to have used her phone. I don't remember.

PY: Were they on a rural route at that point from Indio?

BG: Right. In Indio, yes. Even up to, in the 1950s it was

Indio. I remember where El Dorado Drive went Route 1, Box 96, Indio, back, sometime early fifties.

PY: How about the other utilities? Were any of them being provided or do you have to have your own generator and well?

BG: No. No, they had, she had two good irrigation wells. And we had air conditioner. We had, put a little motor with a little fan on it and a box made out of a grapefruit box (chuckle). But that felt pretty good when you come in from the field on a real hot day and have it flowing through a window right over your bed. We thought that was pretty nice. I think that was about the kind of air conditioner that most of the farm labor had. I don't remember if Claire East had a better one or not. She might, she probably did. I remember she had, she drove a good late-model car, so she probably had a good air conditioner. No one had convenience that they have now. Her father lived with them. I don't remember his name.

PY: Did you get married when you were . . .

BG: After I came back in forty-eight.

PY: Was your wife working then on the McKinzey Ranch?

BG: No. She lived over on Clancey Lane at Rancho Mirage.

And she was from Texas. I didn't know that until, you

know, back there, but . . .

PY: What was she doing on Clancey Lane?

BG: She lived there. Her folks worked on a date garden. Her father did. Or Martha Reed. Do you know Martha Reed?

PY: Heard the name.

BG: I don't think it was for her, but it was there on the same property. It was for her brother. And someone else. One of them was her brother.

PY: They were characters, weren't they?

BG: Yes. (chuckle) And that was almost the end of Clancey Lane. Drove through there the other day and out, was it Monterey, looked down there, Martha Reed's still got an old truck piled down there. Looked like, you know, you can see the house and stuff from up on there, but there's some valuable land in there now. You can sure see where we've missed the boat.

PY: (laughter) Didn't they raise pigs or something, goats and . . .

BG: Oh, she always had some goats and she let people pasture her date garden with sheep or horses or anything, you know. I guess she charged them for it, but it also kept the bermuda grass down. Bermuda grass was solid in

there, so it kept the grass down. Didn't have to be
and made a little money off of it. She was
quite a character.

PY: Someone described her as Ma Kettle.

BG: I haven't seen her for a long time.

PY: Oh, she's still living then?

BG: Is she?

PY: I don't know.

BG: Oh, I don't know. The place looks like it did when you
go out Monterey. You go up past those, where they're
building those new homes. Get up there, you look down
and you can see the place.

PY: Sort of at the end of that date garden there.

BG: Yes, right. She had date garden and her brother had
one, and another guy had one there. My wife's father
took care of those.

PY: What was your father-in-law's name?

BG: Lewis.

PY: That's the last name?

BG: Right. Allen Lewis.

PY: Do you know why they had come to the area?

BG: No. They came about 1943. I don't know. I think someone
from Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas came out here and went
back and told them how, everyone how wonderful it was out

here so everyone just love it up and started coming out here. Maybe it was a good place before all of us got here. (chuckle)

PY: Frankly, I think without all you coming it was great.
(laughter) Better place.

BG: No. We've had a good life here in the desert and no problem, no complaints.

PY: When you moved your family over to the McKinzey place, was your wife working for the . . .

BG: No, she wasn't working. She's never worked except she did some housework for a couple of families for a little while. Then she decided she'd quit that and there's one of them that was several years ago, quite a few years ago, and there's one of them that didn't want her to quit. And she hasn't quit yet, and she still works half a day on Friday. (laughter) Goes out in Palm Desert. So, no, she's never worked out, oh, I'll say never, she's worked, she's helped me where I can do man's work, but as far as holding down just a steady job, why she hasn't. Raising a family, I never did figure she had time for it.

END OF INTERVIEW